

Service Date: November 14, 1990

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE REGULATION
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

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IN THE MATTER Of The Request Of)	UTILITY DIVISION
MONTANA-DAKOTA UTILITIES COMPANY)	
To Change The Assumed Atmospheric)	DOCKET NO. 89.11.43
Pressure Used For Billing Purposes)	
And Refine The Zoning Configuration)	ORDER NO. 5436a
For Thermal Zones 20 and 21.)	
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FINAL ORDER

FINDINGS OF FACT

On November 30, 1989, the Commission received a request from Montana-Dakota Utilities Co. (MDU) to change the assumed atmospheric zoning configuration for Zones 20 and 21. This filing was designated Docket No. 89.11.43.

In this filing, the Company stated that it had been advised by Williston Basin Interstate Pipeline Company (WBIP), that on January 1, 1990, a change in the assumed atmospheric pressure would be implemented affecting nine (9) delivery points in Montana. Williston Basin would charge MDU for gas deliveries based on these recalculated assumed atmospheric pressures. MDU wishes to bill its customers on the same basis. MDU stated that several different formulas, graphs, and tables had previously been used to arrive at assumed atmospheric pressures for gas measurement purposes at gas receipt and delivery points throughout the service territory. MDU

proposed an equation (taken from Smithsonian Physical Tables, 7th Revised Edition, Page 145) to use as the standard to recalculate assumed atmospheric pressures at all present and future Williston Basin/Montana-Dakota custody transfer and sales/receipt points. United States Geological Survey contour maps would be used to establish the elevation of Montana-Dakota delivery/receipt points to be used in the equation to establish assumed atmospheric pressures. (Application pp. 1-2)

MDU's proposed effective date for the atmospheric pressure changes was January 1, 1990. This was the date when Williston Basin was to begin billing Montana-Dakota based upon the changes. (Application p. 2)

MDU also proposed to refine the zoning configuration for Thermal Zones 20 and 21. MDU proposed to create a new Zone 212 (currently within Zone 21), which would utilize a monthly sampler at the Savage border station to measure the BTU content. The new Zone 212 would include the town of Savage and farm-line customers from a point one mile north of the Dawson-Richland County line to the point where input from the Koch Plant intersects with the Glendive-Williston line at Montana State Highway No. 20. Zone 21 would be renumbered as Zone 211 and would begin at Montana State Highway No. 20 rather than the current boundary at Morgan Creek. This zone would continue to be measured with a monthly sampler at Holly Sugar. (Application p. 3)

Zone 20 would be extended northward to the point one mile north of the Dawson-Richland County line, which would include twelve farm-line customers originally served in Zone 21. The assumed atmospheric pressure for these customers would be the same as the Glendive Division. A copy of the map showing the proposed changes was attached to the filing. (Application p. 3)

MDU proposed to implement the extension of Zone 20 (to include the southern portion of Zone 21) on the 10th workday of December, 1989, when the monthly BTU content was to be changed for billing purposes. Assuming that the sampler to be placed at the Savage border station was received, installed and in service for the major portion of December 1989, MDU proposed to implement the Zone 212 change on the 10th workday in January 1990, when the monthly BTU content was to be changed for billing purposes. If the sampler was in service for the major portion of December 1989, MDU proposes to implement the Zone 212 change in February 1990. (Application p. 3)

MDU requested that this filing be accepted as being in full compliance with the filing requirements of the Commission.

On December 1, 1989, the Commission approved Interim Order No. 5436 granting, on an interim basis, only the requested refinements to the configuration of Thermal Zones 21 and 22. All other requests and proposals were denied or deferred until a Final Order could be issued.

The Commission issued a Notice of Opportunity for Public Hearing on March 8, 1990. The notice stated that if any person having proper standing requested a hearing by April 3, 1990, the Commission would schedule such a hearing. Since no requests for public hearing were received, the Commission is now issuing Final Order No. 5436a.

The Commission finds that the requested refinements of the configuration of Thermal Zones 21 and 22 are reasonable and approves those refinements on a final basis.

Concerning the Company's request to change the assumed atmospheric pressure used for billing purposes, the Commission understands that the FERC has not granted WBIP authority to make this change, and that WBIP does not even have an active request before the FERC. The Commission finds that this issue is not ripe for consideration in this docket and dismisses MDU's request. The

Company may make a future filing with the Commission on or after the date WBIP makes a similar filing with the FERC.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Applicant, Montana-Dakota Utilities Company, provides natural gas service within the State of Montana and as such is "public utility" within the meaning of Section 69-3-101, MCA.

The Montana Public Service Commission properly exercises jurisdiction over the Applicant's Montana operations pursuant to Title 69, Chapter 3, MCA.

The Commission has provided adequate notice of all proceedings and opportunity to be heard to all interested parties in this docket. Title 2, Chapter 4, MCA.

The rate levels and spread approved herein are just, reasonable, and not unjustly discriminatory. Section 69-3-330, MCA.

ORDER

THEREFORE THE MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT:

Applicant, Montana-Dakota Utilities Company is hereby granted final authority to refine the zoning configuration for Zones 20 and 21 in the manner proposed in this filing.

Applicant's request for authority to change assumed atmospheric pressure levels is DENIED.

This Order shall be effective immediately.

The Commission approves MDU's request that this is a complete filing and is in full compliance with the filing requirements of the Commission.

DONE IN OPEN SESSION at Helena, Montana this 8th day of November, 1990 by a 5-0 vote.

BY ORDER OF THE MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

HOWARD L. ELLIS, Chairman

DANNY OBERG, Vice Chairman

WALLACE W. "WALLY" MERCER, Commissioner

JOHN B. DRISCOLL, Commissioner

REX MANUEL, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Ann Peck
Commission Secretary

(SEAL)

NOTE: Any interested party may request that the Commission reconsider this decision. A motion to reconsider must be filed within ten (10) days. See 38.2.4806, ARM.